

UK advice fails test

PEOPLE seeking advice from pharmacy staff rather than a GP are being given unsatisfactory and potentially dangerous information in a third of cases, a British investigation has recently revealed.

UK consumer watchdog Which? sent mystery shoppers to 101 British pharmacies to ask about emergency contraception, a migraine drug and traveller's diarrhoea.

A panel of pharmacists analysed the provided advice and found it was unsuitable in 48% of independent pharmacies, 38% of national and regional chains and 26% of the "biggest players" and supermarkets.

The worst example involved the Pharmacist Only migraine medication, Imigran Recovery - in 40% of cases, pharmacy assistants did not alert the pharmacist, while one in five sold it without asking any questions.

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Don't ditch paracetamol

THE PSA is urging pharmacy staff to reassure patients about the use of paracetamol in the light of a spate of media reports last week which linked childhood use of the medication with later development of asthma.

The PSA says paracetamol does not need to be completely avoided, but should be used when necessary, for example if the child has a high fever or is in pain.

PSA vice president Shane Jackson said the study showed only a modest association and did not prove a causal link.

He also said the children may have appeared to have a higher risk of asthma due to the condition that was being treated with paracetamol, as children with asthma are more likely to have upper respiratory tract infections, and more paracetamol may have been given to help with pain and fever.

He advised PSA members to be

Contraception pack

PHASE 2 of Pharmacy Self Care's Contraception Health Campaign has been released in conjunction with Bayer Schering Pharma.

The package includes a consumer health-facts info deskpad, in-pharmacy health promotion posters & stickers, to be distributed to all Pharmacy Self Care member pharmacies.

The release coincides with the launch of a new formulation of combined oral contraceptive.

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practical about their approach in light of 'new' findings.

"Paracetamol is a very useful medication for children, and we should continue to advise parents to use this medication when indicated.

"Pharmacists should try and clarify for parents regarding the use of paracetamol and the link with asthma, and put the risk into context for the parent," he said.

Heart compliance

THE Pharmacy Guild and the National Heart Foundation will trial a community pharmacy service to monitor compliance with blood pressure medications.

Initially 60 community pharmacies will be involved in an initial study which aims to identify patients who will receive the most benefit from the service.

Most events OK

MEDICINES Australia said today that just 21 out of almost 16000 educational events provided by pharmaceutical companies over the last six months didn't comply with its Code of Conduct.

The report showed the industry spent \$17.9m on hospitality and \$32.6m in event costs, with an average hospitality cost of \$45.

MA ceo Ian Chalmers said the independent monitoring showed 99.9% of educational events comply "but we want to get to 100 per cent, so any breaches of the code won't be tolerated."

Win an Auto Eye Shadow!



TODAY is your last chance to win an Auto Eye Shadow from Designer Brands, courtesy of **Total Beauty Network**.

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HINT: Go to www.tbn.com.au and click on the Designer Brands logo at the top of the page.



DISPENSARY CORNER



THINGS on the internet seem to last forever.

PD received a message today advising of the urgent recall of "all drugs containing phenylpropanolamine" because they could cause "increased hemorrhagic stroke" risk.

The email goes on to list a large number of OTC cough and cold medications and provides a link to a page on the US Food and Drug Administration website.

However the alert in question is almost eight years old, relating to an FDA Public Health Advisory issued on 06 Nov 2000 and a later reclassification of phenylpropanolamine preparations in 2005.

In Australia most of the affected products were withdrawn in 1983, with a few remaining OTC remedies taken off the market in 2001.

But hysteria in the email, which urges readers to forward it to all their friends, is certain to see it continue to circulate for the next few years.

THE first pharmacy school in Manhattan, New York, is set to open shortly, with a grand total of 66 students.

The Touro School of Pharmacy aims to address the shortage of pharmacy graduates in the US.

By the close of 2011 the NYC pharmacy school expects to have a faculty of 40 members and an operating budget of US\$11 million.

There's currently a pretty good teacher-student ratio; for the inaugural class of 66 students, the school has 18 faculty members!

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